

MAX
notes®

William Shakespeare's
**Romeo
and Juliet**

Text by

Judy Clamon

(M.A., East Texas State University)

Department of English

Mabank High School

Mabank, Texas

Illustrations by

Karen Pica

An REA Lesson Plan



Research & Education Association

Visit our website at

www.rea.com

SECTION ONE

Introduction

The Life and Work of William Shakespeare

Details about William Shakespeare's life are sketchy, mostly mere surmise based upon court or other clerical records. His parents, John and Mary (Arden), were married about 1557; she was of the landed gentry, and he a yeoman—a glover and commodities merchant. By 1568, John had risen through the ranks of town government and held the position of high bailiff, similar to mayor. William, the eldest son and the third of eight children, was born in 1564, probably on April 23, several days before his baptism on April 26 in Stratford-upon-Avon. Shakespeare is also believed to have died on the same date—April 23—in 1616.

It is believed William attended the local grammar school in Stratford where his parents lived, and studied primarily Latin rhetoric, logic, and literature. At age 18 (1582), William married Anne Hathaway, a local farmer's daughter who was eight years his senior. Their first daughter (Susanna) was born six months later (1583), and twins Judith and Hamnet were born in 1585.

Shakespeare's life can be divided into three periods: the first 20 years in Stratford, which include his schooling, early marriage, and fatherhood; the next 25 years as an actor and playwright in London; and the last five in retirement back in Stratford where he enjoyed moderate wealth gained from his theatrical successes. The years linking the first two periods are marked by a lack of information about Shakespeare, and are often referred to as the “dark years.”

Shakespeare probably left school at age 15, which was the norm, to take a job, especially since this was the period of his

father's financial difficulty. Numerous references in his plays suggest that William may have in fact worked for his father, in addition to a myriad of other jobs, thereby gaining specialized knowledge.

At some point during the "dark years," Shakespeare began his career with a London theatrical company, perhaps in 1589, for he was already an actor and playwright of some note by 1592.

Shakespeare apparently wrote and acted for numerous theatrical companies, including Pembroke's Men, and Strange's Men, which later became the Chamberlain's Men, with whom he remained for the rest of his career.

In 1592, the Plague closed the theaters for about two years, and Shakespeare turned to writing book length narrative poetry. Most notable were "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece," both of which were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, whom scholars accept as Shakespeare's friend and benefactor despite a lack of documentation. During this same period, Shakespeare was writing his sonnets, which are more likely signs of the time's fashion rather than actual love poems detailing any particular relationship. He returned to playwriting when theaters reopened in 1594, and did not continue to write poetry. His sonnets were published without his consent in 1609, shortly before his retirement.

Amid all of his success, Shakespeare suffered the loss of his only son, Hamnet, who died in 1596 at the age of 11.

But Shakespeare's career continued unabated; and in London in 1599, he became one of the partners in the new Globe Theater, which was built by the Chamberlain's Men.

When Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 and was succeeded by her cousin King James of Scotland, the Chamberlain's Men was renamed the King's Men. Shakespeare's productivity and popularity continued uninterrupted. He invested in London real estate and, one year away from retirement, purchased a second theater, the Blackfriars Gatehouse, in partnership with his fellow actors.

Shakespeare wrote very little after 1612, which was the year he completed *Henry VIII*. It was during a performance of this play in 1613 that the Globe caught fire and burned to the ground. Sometime between 1610 and 1613, Shakespeare returned to Stratford, where he owned a large house and property, to spend his remaining years with his family.

William Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616, and was buried two days later in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church where he had been baptized exactly 52 years earlier. His literary legacy included 37 plays, 154 sonnets and five major poems.

Incredibly, most of Shakespeare's plays had never been published in anything except pamphlet form, and were simply extant as acting scripts stored at the Globe. Theater scripts were not regarded as literary works of art, but only the basis for the performance. Plays were simply a popular form of entertainment for all layers of society in Shakespeare's time. Only the efforts of two of Shakespeare's company, John Heminges and Henry Condell, preserved his 36 plays (minus *Pericles*, the thirty-seventh).

Historical Background

The first permanent professional theater in England was built around 1576 and was called the Theater. Other theaters soon opened, including two called the Curtain and the Rose. Not only was Shakespeare working as a playwright and an actor for the Theater, he was also a stock holder.

Another theater soon opened and became one of the most famous of the London public playhouses. It was completed around 1599 and was called the Globe. It was perhaps the largest theater in England and derived its name "from the sign painted above its door, a picture of Atlas holding the world on his shoulders" (Kittredge). Shakespeare also owned stock in the Globe and performed as an actor in many of his own plays. The Globe was an enclosed theater without a roof. The spectators who stood or sat on the ground around the acting area were called "groundlings." The wealthier playgoers sat in galleries surrounding the stage area. There was no curtain, and sunlight provided the lighting for the performances; therefore, the performances were held during the day. Because there were no sets or scene changes, Shakespeare's characters wore extravagant costumes to provide the beauty and pageantry that was expected on the stage. Plays were usually fast-paced and colorful productions. The actors, as a rule, played more than one part in a play, and all of the women's parts were portrayed by young boys.

Shakespeare began writing comedies from about 1594 to 1603. During this period he produced such works as *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*. Two of Shakespeare's tragedies were also written during this time period. One was *Julius Caesar* and the other was *Romeo and Juliet*.

The play version of *Romeo and Juliet* was probably written early in his career around 1595 to 1596. The play is considered to be a tragedy and portrays the interplay of human character and motive. Much of *Romeo and Juliet* is written in blank verse, which is unrhymed iambic pentameter. Iambic simply means a metrical foot made up of an unstressed and stressed syllable, and pentameter means that each line has five metrical feet. While most of *Romeo and Juliet* is written in iambic pentameter, the characters of lower social position speak in prose.

The play is rich in rhyming words, word plays, and puns. Most of Shakespeare's plays begin with a great deal of action designed to capture the attention of the groundlings immediately. Therefore, *Romeo and Juliet* begins with a street fight between the servants of the Capulets and the Montagues, the warring families in the play.

The plot of *Romeo and Juliet* was taken from an earlier version of the story. The theme appeared in the fourth century in a Greek tale and later in the sixteenth century as Luigi da Porto's *Hystoria di due nobili Amanti*. In the later version, the city is Verona, and da Porto was the first to call the hero and heroine Romeo and Giulietta. Probably Shakespeare's most direct source was a long English narrative poem written in 1562 by Arthur Brooke, called *The Tragical Historye of Romeus and Juliet*. Shakespeare used the characters in Brooke's poem but developed them in much greater depth and detail, thus transforming the story of star-crossed lovers into the most famous love story ever known.

Master List of Characters

Friends and Relatives of the Montague Family:

Romeo—*Son of Montague who falls in love with Juliet*

Montague—*Head of the family who is at war with the Capulets and father to Romeo*

Lady Montague—*Wife to Lord Montague and mother to Romeo*

Mercutio—*A kinsman to the prince and a friend to Romeo*

Benvolio—*A gentle and peace-loving young man who is nephew to Montague and a friend to Romeo*

Balthasar—*A loyal friend and servant to Romeo*

Abram—*A servant of the Montague family*

Friends and Relatives of the Capulet Family:

Juliet—*Daughter of Capulet who falls in love with Romeo*

Tybalt—*A fiery tempered young man who is the nephew of Lady Capulet and cousin to Juliet*

Capulet—*Head of the family who is at war with the Montagues and father to Juliet*

Lady Capulet—*Wife to Lord Capulet and mother to Juliet*

Nurse—*A witty nurse and friend to Juliet*

Sampson—*A servant of the Capulet family*

Gregory—*A servant of the Capulet family*

Peter—*A servant to Juliet's nurse*

Other Characters:

Chorus—*Introduces the play, and sets scene in Acts I and II*

Paris—*Kinsman to the prince and a young nobleman who asks for Juliet's hand in marriage*

Escalus—*The prince of Verona*

Friar Laurence—*A Franciscan friar who marries the lovers in hopes of making peace with the two warring families*

Friar John—*A Franciscan friar who was entrusted with an important letter to Romeo*

Apothecary—*A poor druggist in Mantua who sells poison to Romeo*

Page—*A servant to Paris*

Summary of the Play

The play opens with the servants of the Montague and Capulet families quarreling and fighting in the streets of Verona, Italy. The two families have been enemies for as long as anyone can remember. Romeo, son of Lord Montague, accidentally finds out about a ball given by Lord Capulet and plans to attend uninvited. Romeo and his friends Mercutio and Benvolio put on masks and attend the ball, where Romeo meets the beautiful Juliet and falls instantly in love. Later that night Romeo goes to Juliet's balcony and they exchange vows of love. Romeo enlists the help of Friar Laurence, who agrees to marry the young lovers in hopes of ending the long-standing feud between the two families.

Romeo returns from his wedding and finds that his friend Mercutio is engaged in combat with Tybalt, a member of the Capulet family. Tybalt kills Mercutio. Romeo, enraged over his friend's death, then slays Tybalt. Romeo immediately realizes that he has murdered his wife's cousin and flees to Friar Laurence for help. He also learns that the Prince has banned him from the city under penalty of death if he is found within its borders. Friar Laurence arranges for Romeo to spend one last night with Juliet before he flees to Mantua.

In the meantime, Lord Capulet, unaware that Juliet is married to Romeo, has promised her hand in marriage to Paris. When Juliet is told of the arranged marriage, she is desperate and seeks the help of Friar Laurence, who gives her a vial of sleeping potion. The potion will have a death-like but temporary effect. The plan is for Juliet to take the potion, appear to be dead, and be laid out in the family vault. Romeo will come to the vault the next night, and be there waiting when she awakens. The couple will then flee to Mantua to live. Friar Laurence sends the important message to Romeo telling him of his plan to help Juliet, but the message never

reaches Romeo. Juliet, assured by Friar Laurence that Romeo will be waiting for her when she awakens in the tomb, goes home and drinks the potion.

Hearing that Juliet is dead, Romeo purchases poison from a poor apothecary and rushes to her tomb. Upon his arrival, he finds Paris, also in mourning. Thinking that Romeo has come to rob the tomb, Paris fights with Romeo. Romeo kills Paris, enters into the tomb, and buries Paris there. He then bids farewell to Juliet and takes the poison. Awakening from her death-like sleep, Juliet discovers her dead lover and kills herself with Romeo's dagger. Friar Laurence arrives too late to save the lovers and tells the Prince the entire story. The Montagues and Capulets promise to end their hostilities, which have caused the deaths of their only children.

Estimated Reading Time

Because of the play form and the language of Shakespeare, an average student should spend about an hour per act in individual reading. Each act may be broken down into two or three scenes at a time to ensure understanding. The language might be difficult at first, and will require careful examination of footnotes or helps located in the text. After reading each scene, you should answer all study questions in relation to that scene to ensure understanding and comprehension. The essay questions may be used if needed. Since there are five acts in *Romeo and Juliet*, you should expect to spend approximately five hours divided in segments of eight to ten sessions.

SECTION TWO

Act I

Act I, Scenes 1 and 2

New Characters:

Chorus

Sampson: *a servant in the Capulet household*

Gregory: *a servant in the Capulet household*

Benvolio: *a peace-loving friend to Romeo and the Montague family*

Tybalt: *a fiery-tempered member of the Capulet family*

Lord Capulet: *the head of the Capulet household*

Lady Capulet: *the wife of Lord Capulet and mother of Juliet*

Lord Montague: *the head of the Montague household*

Lady Montague: *the wife of Lord Montague and the mother of Romeo*

Prince Escalus: *the Prince of Verona whose job is to keep the peace*

Romeo: *the tragic hero of the play who falls in love with the enemy's daughter, Juliet*

Paris: *the young nobleman who is asking Lord Capulet for Juliet's hand in marriage*

Servant: *a servant to the Capulet family who has been asked to deliver invitations to the ball*

Abram: *servant to Montague*

Study Questions

1. What is the setting for the play?
2. What scene of conflict opens the action of the play?
3. Which character tries to stop the fighting among the servants?
4. Which character is aggressive and eager to fight?
5. What warning does the Prince give to anyone who breaks the peace again?
6. Who has asked for Juliet's hand in marriage?
7. How old is Juliet?
8. In what state of mind is Romeo when we first see him in the play?
9. Explain how Romeo finds out about the Capulet ball.
10. How does Benvolio try to remedy Romeo's love sickness?

Answers

1. The setting is a street scene in Verona, Italy.
2. The play opens with a conflict between the Capulet and Montague servants. Eventually, even the townspeople become involved.
3. Benvolio tries to stop the fighting among the servants.
4. Tybalt is aggressive and eager to fight. He challenges Benvolio to draw his sword.
5. The Prince decrees that if anyone breaks the peace again, he shall pay with his life.
6. Paris has asked for Juliet's hand in marriage.
7. Juliet is thirteen years old.
8. As the play opens, Romeo's state of mind can best be described as love-sick, in love with love, moody, and melancholy.
9. Romeo finds out about the Capulet ball when an illiterate Capulet servant asks him to read the invitation list to him.

10. Benvolio tries to remedy Romeo's love-sickness by getting him to consent to go to the Capulet ball and examine other beauties.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Explain the operation of fate and how it has worked in Scenes 1 and 2 of the play to help bring the two lovers together.
2. Explain the rules of marriage during the fourteenth century.
3. What major conflicts are established in the first scene?
4. Explain the purpose of the Prologue.

Act I, Scenes 3-5

New Characters:

Nurse: *Juliet's nurse who has taken care of her since her infancy*

Susan: *the Nurse's daughter who was born on the same day as Juliet but died. She is not in the scene but is alluded to by the Nurse*

Mercutio: *a friend to Romeo who loves words*

Study Questions

1. Who is Susan?
2. When is Juliet's birthday?
3. Why does Lady Capulet visit with Juliet? What questions does she ask her?
4. How do the Nurse and Lady Capulet feel about Paris?
5. Which character loves to talk?
6. Who is Queen Mab?
7. What premonition does Romeo have?
8. How did Lord Capulet force the young ladies to dance with him?
9. Who recognizes Romeo's voice at the feast and becomes furious because he is allowed to stay?
10. Who first tells Romeo and Juliet who the other is?

Answers

1. Susan is the Nurse's daughter who was born on the same day as Juliet; however, she died.
2. Juliet's birthday is on Lammas Eve.
3. Lady Capulet visits with Juliet to ask her if she is ready for marriage. She asks Juliet to look at Paris at the feast that night.
4. The Nurse and Lady Capulet feel that Paris is a perfect match for Juliet and are in favor of the marriage.

5. Mercutio loves to talk and uses figurative language and many plays on words.
6. Queen Mab is the Queen of Fairies. She is responsible for what men dream.
7. Romeo has a premonition that something is about to happen that will shorten his life.
8. Lord Capulet threatens to tell everyone that any young lady who does not dance with him has corns on her feet.
9. Tybalt recognizes Romeo's voice and becomes furious when Lord Capulet allows him to remain at the ball.
10. The Nurse is the one who identifies each of the lovers.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Compare the love that Romeo feels for Juliet to the love that he felt for Rosaline.
2. Explain the imagery of light and dark in Act I and how it is used as symbols for Rosaline and Juliet.
3. How does Shakespeare use humor in Act I?
4. Trace how fate has brought the two lovers together.

SECTION THREE

Act II

Act II, Scenes 1 and 2

Study Questions

1. Instead of returning home, where does Romeo go after the ball?
2. What is a soliloquy and how is it used in Scene 2?
3. By whose name does Mercutio call for Romeo?
4. How does Romeo learn of Juliet's love for him?
5. What does Romeo say helped him climb over the high walls of the Capulet orchard and find Juliet's window?
6. What do Romeo and Juliet exchange?
7. What do Romeo and Juliet plan to do the next day?
8. To what does Romeo compare Juliet's beauty?
9. Who keeps interrupting the balcony scene?
10. Why does Juliet ask Romeo not to swear by the moon?

Answers

1. After the ball, Romeo goes over the wall and into the Capulet orchard.
2. A soliloquy is a dramatic monologue spoken aloud by a character to reveal his thoughts to the audience. Romeo uses a soliloquy to describe Juliet's beauty as she stands on her balcony.

3. Mercutio keeps calling for Romeo in Rosaline's name.
4. He overhears Juliet speaking of her love for him when she thinks she is alone.
5. Love, which gave him wings, helped him over the wall and made it possible for him to find her balcony.
6. Romeo and Juliet exchange vows of love.
7. Romeo and Juliet plan to be married the next day.
8. Romeo compares Juliet's beauty to brightness, warmth, and light.
9. The Nurse keeps interrupting the balcony scene.
10. Juliet asks Romeo not to swear his love on the moon because the moon appears to change in size as it orbits the earth, suggesting that it is fickle.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Explain how imagery and figures of speech make Scene 2 one of the most beautiful scenes in the play. Describe the imagery and figures of speech and illustrate how they are used.
2. Explain the purpose of Scenes 1 and 2.
3. Discuss Juliet's concerns in the balcony scene.

Act II, Scenes 3 and 4

New Characters:

Friar Laurence: *a Franciscan friar who is a priest and a specialist in herbs and medicines. He hopes that the marriage will end the feud between the two families.*

Peter: *the Nurse's servant*

Study Questions

1. What is Friar Laurence's special skill or area of knowledge?
2. With what does Friar Laurence compare the beneficial and poisonous parts of the plant?
3. About what does the Friar caution Romeo?
4. Why does the Friar agree to marry Romeo and Juliet?
5. Who has sent Romeo a challenge for a duel?
6. What excuse is Juliet to give for going to Friar Laurence's cell?
7. Where are Romeo and Juliet to be married?
8. Who teases Romeo about Rosaline and his love-sickness?
9. Who teases the Nurse and causes her to become crass?
10. How does Romeo plan to get into Juliet's window?

Answers

1. Friar Laurence's special skill is in making medicines and potions from herbs.
2. Friar Laurence compares the beneficial and poisonous parts of a plant to the good and evil within a man.
3. Friar Laurence cautions Romeo about being too hasty.
4. The Friar believes that by marrying the two lovers, he will end the feud between the Capulets and the Montagues.
5. Tybalt has sent Romeo a challenge for a duel. He is angry

that Romeo came to the ball uninvited and was allowed to remain.

6. Juliet is going to get permission to go to Friar Laurence's cell by saying that she needs to go to shrift, or confession.
7. Romeo and Juliet are to be married in Friar Laurence's cell.
8. Mercutio, Romeo's friend, teases him about Rosaline and his love-sickness.
9. Mercutio teases the Nurse and causes her to become angry.
10. Romeo has given the Nurse a rope ladder in order that he might climb into Juliet's window later that night.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Name the two other people in the play who know about the love between Romeo and Juliet and explain how they help the lovers achieve their goals.
2. Explain Friar Laurence's philosophy concerning the parts of a plant as compared to the potential actions of man.
3. Describe Mercutio and his role in the play.

Act II, Scenes 5 and 6

Study Questions

1. At what time did Juliet send the Nurse to see Romeo and find out the wedding plans?
2. How long has Juliet been waiting for the Nurse to return with the news from Romeo?
3. How does the Nurse react when she finally returns?
4. How does the Nurse feel about the marriage?
5. What is the Friar afraid of?
6. The friar warns Romeo again about something. What is it?
7. How much do the lovers say their love has grown?
8. How many people know of the marriage?
9. Where does the marriage take place?
10. What is another name for the Friar?

Answers

1. Juliet sent the Nurse at nine o'clock in the morning to find out the wedding news from Romeo.
2. Juliet has been waiting three hours for the Nurse to return with the news.
3. The Nurse teases Juliet by claiming to be tired from her journey and prolongs telling her the news.
4. The Nurse is in favor of the marriage and feels that Romeo is handsome as well as polite.
5. The Friar is afraid that both lovers are acting too hastily.
6. The Friar warns Romeo again about acting too hastily.
7. The lovers say that their love has grown to such an extent that it cannot be counted.
8. Four main characters know of the marriage. Romeo and Juliet, of course, are aware; but also the Nurse and Friar Laurence have become accomplices in the affair.

9. The marriage takes place in Friar Laurence's cell or chapel.
10. Friar Laurence is also referred to as the ghostly confessor.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Explain the relationship between the Nurse and Juliet.
2. Explain the rules of courtship during this time period. Compare and contrast the actions of Paris and of Romeo in regard to courting and marriage.
3. Friar Laurence plays an important role in the lives of Romeo and Juliet. Explain his role in their lives—his concerns and his hopes.

S E C T I O N F O U R

Act III

Act III, Scenes 1 and 2

Study Questions

1. Who begs Mercutio to leave the streets of Verona because the Capulets might also be out on this extremely hot day?
2. Who comes to the public square looking for a fight with Romeo?
3. What does Mercutio call Tybalt?
4. How does Tybalt insult Romeo and try to get him to fight him?
5. Why won't Romeo fight Tybalt?
6. Why does Mercutio fight Tybalt?
7. How is Mercutio killed?
8. Why does Romeo kill Tybalt?
9. Who tells the Prince about the murders?
10. What is Romeo's punishment?

Answers

1. Benvolio tries to get Mercutio to leave the streets of Verona because he is trying to prevent another fight.
2. Tybalt comes to the public square hoping to incite a fight with Romeo.
3. Mercutio calls Tybalt "Good King of Cats."

4. Tybalt insults Romeo by calling him a villain, hoping that this will cause him to fight.
5. Romeo will not fight Tybalt because now they are related by marriage. Tybalt is Juliet's cousin.
6. Mercutio fights Tybalt because he is angry that Tybalt is insulting Romeo, his friend.
7. Mercutio is killed when Romeo comes between them and blocks his view of Tybalt. Tybalt reaches under Romeo's arm and stabs Mercutio.
8. Romeo kills Tybalt because he feels that he must revenge his friend's death. After all, it was Romeo's fight and not Mercutio's.
9. Benvolio is the one who tells the Prince about the murders and relates exactly what happened.
10. Romeo's punishment is to be banished from Verona. If he is caught in the city of Verona, he will be put to death.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Describe the events that foreshadow the death of Tybalt.
2. Define pun and explain how it is used in this act.
3. Act III is considered the climax of the plot. Explain why this is so.
4. Describe the character of Mercutio and the part he plays in the life of Romeo.

Act III, Scenes 3 and 4

Study Questions

1. What day is it in Scene 3?
2. Where did Romeo run to hide after the murder of Tybalt?
3. How does he react to the news that he is banished from Verona?
4. Who tells him that the Prince has banished him?
5. What upsets Romeo the most about being banished?
6. The Friar gives three reasons that Romeo should be happy. What were they?
7. What does the Nurse give to Romeo?
8. Where is Romeo to go before daybreak?
9. On what day does Lord Capulet plan for Juliet to be married to Paris?
10. Who is to tell Juliet the “good news” concerning her future marriage to Paris?

Answers

1. It is very late on Monday night in Scene 3.
2. After the murders, Romeo ran to hide in Friar Laurence's cell.
3. Romeo would rather die than be banished from Verona.
4. The Friar tells him the news that he will not be killed but only banished.
5. The thought of not seeing or touching Juliet ever again bothers Romeo the most.
6. The Friar gives Romeo three reasons for being happy: Juliet is alive; he is alive, and he is only banished not killed.
7. The Nurse gives Juliet's ring to Romeo.
8. Romeo must leave Juliet's bed chamber before daybreak and go to Mantua.

9. Lord Capulet has arranged for Juliet to marry Paris on Thursday.
10. Lady Capulet is to tell Juliet the “good news” before she retires to bed.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Discuss Friar Laurence's plan to reunite Romeo and Juliet.
2. The nurse and Friar Laurence react differently to the situations presented in these scenes. Compare and contrast these reactions.
3. What events take place that complicate Juliet's life?

Act III, Scene 5

Study Questions

1. On what day does Scene 5 take place?
2. What is significant about the lark and the nightingale?
3. What vision does Juliet have as Romeo is leaving?
4. Who comes to visit with Juliet early that morning?
5. What news does Lady Capulet give to Juliet?
6. What is Juliet's reaction to the news that Lady Capulet gives her?
7. Who does Juliet turn to for help when her parents leave?
8. What advice does the Nurse give Juliet?
9. Why does Juliet tell the Nurse that she is going to see Friar Laurence?
10. If the Friar cannot furnish a solution for Juliet, what does she have the power to do?

Answers

1. Scene 5 takes place on day three, a Tuesday morning.
2. The lovers are trying to determine the time of night or early morning. Romeo must be out of the city before daylight. The nightingale sings at night, while the lark sings in the early part of the morning.
3. Juliet has a vision that she sees Romeo as one dead in the bottom of a tomb.
4. Juliet's mother, Lady Capulet, comes to visit with her early that morning.
5. Lady Capulet brings Juliet the news that her father has consented for her to marry Paris on Thursday.
6. Juliet is upset and willfully says that she will not marry Paris. This is the first time she has been disobedient to her parents.

7. After her parents leave, Juliet turns to the Nurse for a solution to her dilemma.
8. The Nurse advises Juliet to forget Romeo, since he is banished, and marry Paris.
9. Juliet tells the Nurse that she is going to see Friar Laurence to confess her sins and get forgiveness. She is really going there to seek the Friar's help.
10. If Friar Laurence cannot help her, she has the power to commit suicide rather than marry Paris.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Explain the relationship between Juliet and her parents. How has it changed from the beginning of the play?
2. Explain how Juliet has changed from the beginning of Act I up until Act III. Give examples of her behavior then and now.
3. Describe the role of the Nurse in Juliet's life. How does this role change in Act III?
4. What event forms the climax or turning point of the play, and what complications does this event create for Romeo and Juliet?

SECTION FIVE

Act IV

Act IV, Scenes 1-3

Study Questions

1. Why is Paris at Friar Laurence's cell?
2. What reason does Paris give the Friar for the hasty marriage?
3. How long will the sleeping potion take effect?
4. Where will Juliet be put after her family believes that she is dead?
5. Who will be waiting in the tomb when Juliet awakens from the sleeping potion?
6. Who is supervising the preparations for the wedding?
7. What change does Lord Capulet make in the wedding plans?
8. If the potion does not work, what does Juliet plan to do?
9. What vision makes her have the strength to go ahead and drink the potion?
10. How will Romeo know about the plans?

Answers

1. Paris is arranging his wedding with Friar Laurence.
2. The marriage is hasty in order to stop Juliet's tears over Tybalt's death.

3. The sleeping potion will last for 42 hours.
4. After her parents think she is dead, Juliet will be placed in the Capulet vault with her deceased ancestors.
5. When Juliet awakens from the sleeping potion, Romeo will be waiting for her in the tomb.
6. Lord Capulet is supervising the wedding preparations.
7. Lord Capulet moves the wedding from Thursday to Wednesday.
8. If the potion does not work, she plans to kill herself with the dagger that she lays beside her.
9. The vision of Tybalt coming after Romeo gives her the strength to go ahead and drink the potion.
10. Romeo will know of the plan because Friar Laurence is planning to send him a letter.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Write a character sketch of Juliet emphasizing the internal conflict she is experiencing in this act.
2. How has the Friar's hobby contributed to the plot of the play?
3. Discuss the four fears Juliet experiences just before she drinks the sleeping potion.

Act IV, Scenes 4 and 5

Study Questions

1. Scene 4 takes place at what time in the morning?
2. Scene 4 takes place on what day?
3. How do the Capulets know that Paris is approaching?
4. Who is sent to wake up Juliet?
5. What does the Nurse find?
6. Who tries to console the Capulets by saying that Juliet is better off in heaven?
7. How do the wedding preparations change after they find Juliet?
8. How does the County Paris react to the death of Juliet?
9. How does Lord Capulet know that she is dead?
10. How does the act end?

Answers

1. Scene 4 takes place at three in the morning.
2. Scene 4 takes place early on Wednesday morning.
3. The Capulets know that Paris is coming because they can hear the music of his musicians.
4. The Nurse is sent to wake up Juliet.
5. The Nurse finds Juliet “dead” in her bed chamber.
6. The Friar tries to console the Capulets by assuring them that Juliet is in heaven.
7. The wedding preparations change dramatically. The wedding music becomes funeral dirges. The wedding flowers become funeral flowers, and the happiness associated with a wedding becomes sadness.
8. Paris is devastated by the news that Juliet is dead. He says, “Beguiled, divorced, wronged, spited, slain! / Most detest-

able Death, by thee beguiled, / By cruel, cruel thee quite
overthrown. / O love! O life! not life, but love in death!"

9. Lord Capulet believes that Juliet is dead because he feels that her body is cold to the touch and her joints are stiff.
10. Act IV ends with a comic discussion between the musicians and Peter.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Describe the reactions of Lord Capulet, Lady Capulet, the Nurse, and Friar Laurence to the death of Juliet.
2. Define dramatic irony and give examples from this act.

SECTION SIX

Act V

Act V, Scenes 1 and 2

New Characters:

Balthasar: *a servant to Romeo*

Apothecary: *a druggist in Mantua who is extremely poor*

Friar John: *a Franciscan friar who is a friend to Friar Laurence*

Study Questions

1. Where does Scene 1 take place?
2. What was Romeo's dream?
3. Who brings Romeo the news that Juliet is dead?
4. Why does Romeo go to the Apothecary?
5. How much does Romeo pay for the poison?
6. Why does the Apothecary hesitate in selling Romeo the poison?
7. What persuades the Apothecary to go ahead and sell Romeo the poison?
8. Who does Friar Laurence entrust with the important letter to Romeo?
9. Why is the letter not delivered to Romeo?
10. How long will it be before Juliet wakes up?

Answers

1. Scene 1 takes place in Mantua where Romeo has been banished.
2. Romeo dreams that Juliet finds him dead and brings him back to life as an emperor with her kisses.
3. Balthasar, Romeo's servant, brings him the news that Juliet is dead and was buried in the Capulet tomb.
4. Romeo goes to the Apothecary to buy poison.
5. Romeo pays 40 ducats for the poison.
6. The Apothecary hesitates in selling Romeo the poison because it is against the law in Mantua to sell the substance.
7. Because of his extreme poverty, the Apothecary consents to sell Romeo the poison.
8. Friar Laurence entrusts the important letter to Friar John to deliver to Romeo. This letter explains to Romeo about Juliet's pretended death and tells him to be at the tomb when she wakes up.
9. Friar John is not able to deliver the letter because he is quarantined while visiting the sick.
10. Juliet is due to wake up in about three hours.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. What coincidences occur in this act?
2. Explain fully what goes wrong with Friar Laurence's plan to reunite the lovers.

Act V, Scene 3

New Characters:

Page: *a servant to Paris*

Study Questions

1. Why is Paris at Juliet's tomb?
2. What is Paris' last request?
3. Why does Paris think Romeo has come to the Capulet tomb?
4. Who kills Paris?
5. If Romeo had not been so hasty in drinking the poison, what would he have noticed about Juliet?
6. Name the people who have died in this scene.
7. Where does Friar Laurence want to take Juliet?
8. How does Juliet kill herself?
9. Who is suspected the most as a murderer and why?
10. What four accounts does the Prince hear?

Answers

1. Paris has come to Juliet's tomb to bring flowers and weep.
2. As he dies, Paris' last request is to lie beside Juliet.
3. Paris believes that Romeo has come to the tomb to do damage to the bodies of Tybalt and Juliet.
4. Romeo kills Paris.
5. If Romeo had not been so hasty in drinking the poison, he would have understood why Juliet's lips and cheeks were crimson. She was beginning to wake up from the potion.
6. Paris, Lady Montague, Romeo, and Juliet have all died in this scene.
7. When Juliet wakes up, Friar Laurence is there and wants to

take her to a “sisterhood of holy nuns.”

8. Juliet kills herself with Romeo's dagger.
9. Friar Laurence is suspected the most because he is carrying tools for digging and opening tombs.
10. When the Prince wants to know what has happened, Friar Laurence, Balthasar, the Page, and the contents of the letter in Balthasar's possession all give the same account of the events.

Suggested Essay Topics

1. Describe the role of Friar Laurence in the play and how he contributes to the fate of the lovers.
2. Explain in detail how Romeo and Juliet both mature during the course of the play. Cite examples from their speech or actions that illustrate your position.
3. How have the deaths of Romeo and Juliet affected the entire city of Verona?
4. Discuss the role of chance or coincidence in the play. How did it affect the ending of the play?
5. Discuss the role of Paris in the play.

SECTION SEVEN

Sample Analytical Paper Topics

The following paper topics are based on the entire play. Following each topic is a thesis and sample outline. Use these as a starting point for your paper.

Topic #1

Impetuosity is a tragic flaw that affects character and action. This flaw within a character will ultimately cause the death of the protagonist. Write an essay in which hasty decisions or actions result in the final tragedy of the play.

Outline

- I. Thesis Statement: *Impetuosity is a tragic flaw present in the characters of Romeo, Juliet, Lord Capulet, and Friar Laurence.*
- II. Impetuosity of Romeo
 - A. Love
 1. Instant love for Juliet
 2. Decision to marry
 3. Preference to death rather than be parted from Juliet
 - B. Relationship with others
 1. Reaction after he is banished
 2. Kills Tybalt

3. Kills Paris
 4. Purchase of poison from the apothecary
- III. Impetuosity of Juliet
- A. Love
 1. Instant love for Romeo
 2. Decision to marry
 3. Her death
 - B. Relationship to others
 1. Reactions after learning that she is to marry Paris
 2. Her attitude toward her parents
- IV. Impetuosity of Lord Capulet
- A. Decision to give consent for Juliet to marry Paris
 - B. Reaction when Juliet refuses to marry Paris
 - C. Decision to move the date up one day
- V. Impetuosity of Friar Laurence
- A. Willingness to marry Romeo and Juliet
 - B. Sending Friar John with the letter to Romeo instead of Balthasar
 - C. Leaving Juliet in the tomb after she awoke
- VI. Conclusion: Romeo, Juliet, Lord Capulet, and Friar Laurence all acted hastily at some point in the play which contributed to the final destruction of Romeo and Juliet.

Topic #2

Because the entire play represents only five days in the lives of Romeo and Juliet, the time line is an important element. Write an essay explaining the happenings on each of these days and explain how these influenced the outcome of the play.

Outline

- I. Thesis Statement: *Important situations occur in each of these*

five days of the protagonists' lives that influence the outcome of the play.

II. Day One—Sunday

- A. The quarrel among the Capulet and Montague servants
 - 1. Tybalt fights Benvolio
 - 2. Prince issues warning
- B. Romeo's romantic nature
 - 1. His infatuation for Rosaline
 - 2. His love for Juliet is established
- C. Paris asks to marry Juliet
- D. Lord Capulet's ball
 - 1. Romeo and Juliet meet
 - 2. Tybalt's anger is ignited against Romeo

III. Day Two—Monday

- A. Romeo incorporates Friar Laurence's help
- B. The Nurse meets with Romeo to get the wedding plans
- C. Romeo and Juliet are married
- D. The fights on the streets of Verona
 - 1. Tybalt kills Mercutio
 - 2. Romeo kills Tybalt
- E. Romeo is banished
- F. Friar Laurence devises a plan for Romeo and Juliet
- G. Paris is granted permission to marry Juliet

IV. Day Three—Tuesday

- A. Juliet refuses to marry Paris
- B. Friar Laurence devises another plan for Juliet
 - 1. Juliet drinks the sleeping potion
 - 2. Friar Laurence sends a message to Romeo

- V. Day Four—Wednesday
 - A. Juliet is found “dead”
 - B. Juliet is buried in the Capulet monument
- VI. Day Five—Thursday
 - A. Romeo learns of Juliet’s death
 - B. Romeo buys poison
 - C. Romeo kills Paris and himself
 - D. Friar Laurence learns that his message to Romeo was not delivered
 - E. Juliet kills herself
- VII. Conclusion: The plot of Romeo and Juliet is developed in the course of five days in the lives of the protagonists.

Topic #3

The structure of a play is important to the development and ultimate resolution of the conflict. Write an essay in which the five stages of a tragedy are examined showing a relationship to the story and its development.

Outline

- I. Thesis Statement: *A tragedy can be organized by the dramatist into five components of dramatic structure which enable the play to progress smoothly and logically to a conclusion.*
- II. Introduction or exposition
 - A. Tone is established.
 - 1. Feud between the families
 - 2. Love of Romeo and Rosaline
 - 3. Love of Romeo and Juliet
 - B. Setting is evoked.
 - 1. Streets of Verona
 - 2. Capulet household
 - C. Characters are introduced.

III. Complication or rising action

- A. Love between the children of the two feuding families
- B. Marriage of Romeo and Juliet
- C. Tybalt's challenge to Romeo

IV. Climax or Turning Point

- A. The murders
 - 1. Mercutio
 - 2. Tybalt
- B. Romeo's banishment
- C. Lord Capulet's decree that Juliet is to marry Paris

V. Falling Action

- A. Juliet's internal conflict
 - 1. Conflict with her parents
 - 2. Conflict with the nurse
 - 3. Conflict concerning the compulsory marriage to Paris
 - 4. Fears concerning the potion
- B. Friar Laurence's plan for Romeo and Juliet

VI. Conclusion or catastrophe

- A. Friar Laurence's message does not reach Romeo
- B. Deaths
 - 1. Paris
 - 2. Romeo
 - 3. Juliet
- C. Feud ends with the deaths of Romeo and Juliet

VII. Conclusion: The introduction, the complication, the climax, the falling action, and the conclusion are components of dramatic structure which enable the play to progress smoothly and logically to a conclusion.

Topic #4

Fate and coincidence are used extensively in *Romeo and Juliet*. Both these elements helped to bring about the tragedy or destruction of the protagonists. Write an essay in which you give examples of how each element is used.

Outline

- I. Thesis Statement: *The elements of fate—chance, circumstance, and coincidence—are used in Romeo and Juliet to advance the plot and bring about the ultimate deaths of the protagonists.*
- II. Examples of chance and circumstance
 - A. Romeo and Juliet are children of parents who hate one another
 - B. The servant given the list of names for Lord Capulet's ball cannot read
 - C. Benvolio is able to talk Romeo into attending the ball to look at Rosaline
 - D. Lord Capulet allows Romeo to remain at the ball
 - E. Romeo meets and falls in love with Juliet
 - F. The lovers are separated because of an accidental fight
 - G. The Prince decrees that Romeo is to be banished instead of put to death
- III. Examples of coincidence
 - A. Romeo is asked to read the invitation list for the illiterate servant
 - B. Tybalt recognizes Romeo's voice at the ball
 - C. Lord Capulet moves the wedding day from Thursday to Wednesday
 - D. Balthasar happens to see Juliet's funeral and tells Romeo of her death
 - E. Friar John is quarantined and Friar Laurence's message never reaches Romeo
 - F. Friar Laurence arrives too late at Juliet's tomb.

- IV. Conclusion: The elements of fate work hand in hand with each other to bring about the inevitable deaths of the protagonists.

Topic #5

Comic relief is used by Shakespeare to delight his audiences. It is often used after an intense scene to relieve the tension brought about by the extremely emotional dialogue or actions in the play. Write an essay describing the situations when comic relief or humor was used by different characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Outline

- I. Thesis Sentence: *The use of comic relief or humor is used predominantly by three of Shakespeare's characters to relieve some of the moments of tension in Romeo and Juliet.*
- II. Nurse
 - A. Her compulsion to talk
 - B. Her use of malapropisms
 - C. Her teasing of Juliet
- III. Mercutio
 - A. His Queen Mab speech
 - B. The exchange between Benvolio and Mercutio in Act II, Scene 1
 - C. His use of puns and figurative language
- IV. Lord Capulet
 - A. His remarks toward the young ladies at his ball
 - B. His behavior at the ball
 - C. His preparations for the wedding
- V. Conclusion: Humor is used as a comic relief by the nurse, Mercutio, and Lord Capulet in order to relieve the tension brought about by more intense scenes or situations.